

live well, work well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home, and life—brought to you by the insurance and healthcare specialists at M3.

Food Facts...and Fiction

You know that it's important to eat plenty of whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. However, you probably have some lingering questions regarding the particulars of your diet. This should help!

Are avocados good or bad for you?

While it's true that avocados contain more calories and fat than other fruits or veggies (one-fifth of an avocado contains 50 calories and 4.5 grams of fat), the health benefits far outweigh the bad. Avocados contain heart-healthy unsaturated fat, which can actually lower cholesterol. Plus, they are packed with vitamins, fiber and minerals, and provide all of the essential amino acids required in a healthy diet.

Are some nuts better for you than others?

Yes. All nuts are rich in fiber, vitamin E, and protein, but it appears that walnuts contain the highest levels of omega-3 fatty acids, almonds have the most vitamin E, cashews have the most iron, and Brazil nuts contain the most selenium (which works as an antioxidant) and magnesium. Opt for varieties without added salt for the most health benefits.

What's the difference between a vegetable and a fruit?

It's easy to get confused. The term "vegetable" is generally defined as all plant life or plant products, more specifically, the

edible portion of herbaceous plants (roots, stems, leaves, flowers or fruit). A "fruit" is the ripened ovary, together with its seeds, of a flowering plant. So, technically all fruits are considered vegetables, but not all vegetables are considered fruits. In fact, the previously mentioned avocado is actually a fruit produced from the avocado tree.

Does eating grilled meat cause cancer?

The National Cancer Institute states that cooking meat at very high temperatures creates chemicals – called heterocyclic amines, or HCAs – not otherwise found in uncooked meat. Eating grilled meat on occasion is fine. However, excessive consumption of grilled meat at very high temperatures does appear to increase the risk for cancer, which is why experts recommend that meat be cooked at low temperatures for longer periods of time. Research has also shown that microwaving meat before grilling decreases the risk of HCAs.

Which is better: margarine or butter?

Butter is full of saturated fat and cholesterol, but margarine

contains trans fat. While neither is ideal, it's generally better to opt for margarine. This is because you should be able to identify which margarine products contain the least amount of trans fat. According to Cleveland Clinic, the more solid margarine is at room temperature, the more trans fat it contains; for example, stick margarine has more trans fat than the tub. There are also many trans fat-free margarine products, which are best of all.

Is sushi healthy?

In a word, yes. In general, fish is good for you, but you'll want to avoid excessive amounts of white rice. Also, opt for no mayonnaise and use low-sodium or no soy sauce. Sashimi – cut fish served with either no rice or brown rice – is actually the best option.



Did you know...?

Freezing a fruit or vegetable does not necessarily affect its nutrition value; in fact, sometimes the frozen produce is actually a better choice! This is because the longer it sits around, the more nutrients it loses. Fruits and vegetables grown specifically for freezing are frozen right after being picked, not allowing much time for them to lose any nutrients.